DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 281 134 CG 019 868

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TITLE Relationship between Self-Concept and Locus of Control in Grade School Children.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Mississippi Academy of Science (Jackson, MS, 1987). Best copy available.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Intermediate Grades; *Locus of Control; Personality Traits; *Preadolescents; Relationship; *Self Concept; Student Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Several investigators have proposed that locus of control has a significant effect on several aspects of classroom behavior. Horak (1979) found that children with a high self-concept tended to be internally controlled, whereas children with a low self-concept tended to be externally controlled. The present investigation sought to further examine the relationship between locus of control and self-concept. Fourth- and fifth-grade students (N=107) were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-H) and the Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (N-S) in a group format. The results indicated a non-significant negative relationship between the N-S Total Scale and the P-H ($r(105) = -.1248$, $p>.05$). These results, although non-significant, suggest a trend toward high self-concept in internally oriented children. (Author/NB)

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Relationship Between Self-Concept and Locus of Control in Grade School Children

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Running Head: SELF-CONCEPT AND LOCUS OF CONTROL

Paper Presented at the Annual Convention of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences, Jackson, MS. 1987.

Abstract

Several investigators have proposed that locus of control has a significant effect on several aspects of classroom behavior (e.g., Weiner, et al., 1971; Horak, 1979). For example, Horak reported that internally controlled children display a high level of self-concept, whereas externally controlled children display a low level of self-concept. The present investigation sought to further examine the relationship between locus of control and self-concept. One hundred and seven fourth- and fifth-grade children were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (P-H) and the Nowicki Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (N-S) in a group format. Results indicated a non-significant negative relationship between the N-S Total Scale and the P-H ($r(105) = -.1248$, $p>.05$). These results, although non-significant, suggest a trend toward high self-concept in internally oriented children.

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Relationship Between Self-Concept and Locus of Control in Grade School Children

In recent years, the factors associated with the development of self-concept in children has received much attention. The current research in the area of achievement and self-concept, indicates that a change in environmental conditions (i.e., an increased ratio of success to failure) will have differential effects on high and low self-concept in children. Furthermore, current research also suggests that locus of control orientation (internal/external) also contributes to the development of the child's self-concept (Horak, 1979). Internal locus of control is defined as the belief that one has control over the events or outcome of events in his/her life; whereas, external locus of control is defined as the belief that the outcome of events is attributed to luck, fate, or other external forces in the environment. Horak found that children with a high self-concept tended to be internal, whereas children with a low self-concept tended to be external.

The purpose of the present investigation was to further examine the relationship between locus of control and self-concept in school aged children. It was hypothesized that those students found to report a low self-concept would tend to report an external locus of control orientation, whereas, those students reporting a high self-concept would tend to report an internal locus of control orientation.

Method

One hundred and seven fourth- and fifth-grade children from an elementary laboratory school, located at Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, LA. served in this study. All students participating in the study were regular classroom students. Participants were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984) and the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973) in a group format, in their respective classrooms. For clarity, the examiner read the individual questions aloud during administration, and encouraged any questions about the meaning of any particular statement. Upon completion of

the questionnaires, students and teachers were thanked for their paritcipation.

Results

Data were analyzed utilizing the Pearson Product-Moment correlation procedure. Results indicated a non-significant negative correlation ($r(105) = -.1248$, $p>.05$) between locus of control and self-concept in the sample of children studied. These findings, while non-significant, were found to be in the stated direction of the hypothesis, indicating some support for the stated relationship.

Discussion

The hypothesis predicted a negative relationship between the measure of self-concept and that of locus of control in the sample of school aged children tested. The findings of the present study indicated a very low (non-significant) negative correlation between the two constructs. Children reflecting an external locus of control did have a tendency to reflect a low self-concept, while children reflecting an internal locus of control had a tendency to reflect a high self-concept. However, the degree of relationship

between the two constructs was found to be lower than expected.

In a similar study, examining the relationship between the same two constructs, Tavormina (1975) found a moderate negative correlation indicating a much higher degree of relationship be ween the two constructs. One possible explanation for the inconsistency between the results of the present study and those of Tavormina (1975) is in sample size. The present study used a relatively small sample size, and therefore, caution should be used when interpreting the results obtained. Furthermore, because of the special academic characteristics of the sample, only limited generalizations can be made from the results of the present study.

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